

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Languages of Europe

Read the following passage with your partner. Underline any unfamiliar terms. Write any questions you may have in the margins. Use the space below to sketch a diagram of the Indo-European language family tree.

Language is one of the primary ways Europeans define themselves. Most Europeans—and about half of the people in the world—speak languages that evolved out of an ancient parent language known as Indo-European. All three of Europe's main language families are descended from Indo-European:

- The Slavic languages, such as Russian, Ukrainian, Polish, and Czech.
- The Romance languages, which are based on Latin. Romance languages spread through Europe with the Roman armies between 400 B.C. and A.D. 400. Romance languages include Romanian, Italian, French, Spanish, and Portuguese.
- The Germanic languages—not only German, but also Dutch, Danish, Swedish, and Norwegian. English is considered a Germanic language strongly influenced by Romance languages.

The Finns, Hungarians, and Estonians are geographically and ethnically separate. However, all speak Uralic languages. Uralic languages are not part of the Indo-European family. They were handed down from people who migrated west from the Ural Mountains in ancient times. Smaller language families have been important in creating national pride and political movements throughout Europe. For example, the people of Scotland, Wales, and Ireland support educational policies and laws designed to keep English from eclipsing their native Celtic languages.